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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJE-T: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. MOROCCO AND THE SAHARA ISSUE: SPAIN AND MOROCCO HAVE THEIR TROUBLES TOO

EMBASSY MADRID REPORTS THAT SPAIN IS SHOWING UNHAPPINESS OVER MOROCCAN ACTIONS IN THE SAHARA. THE SPANISH:

--ARE IRRITATED THAT THE DECOLONIZATION OF THE SAHARA DID NOT INCLUDE PROPER CONSULTATION WITH THE POPULACE IN THE PRESENCE OF A UN OFFICIAL, AND HAVE REFUSED TO BE A PARTY TO EVENTS CELEBRATING THE "REINCORPORATION" OF MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA;
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--ARE CONCERNED THAT THEIR REFUSAL TO UNDERWRITE THE FORM OF MOROCCO'S TAKEOVER WILL CAUSE SNAGS IN BILATERAL PROJECTS OUTLINED IN THE SPANISH-MOROCCAN UNDERSTANDING OF NOVEMBER, 1975;

--MAY BE DRAGGING THEIR FEET ON NEW ECONOMIC PROPOSALS PROJECTED IN THE UNDERSTANDING UNTIL CONFISCATED AND NATIONALIZED SPANISH INTERESTS ARE INDEMNIFIED. (CONFIDENTIAL) MADRID 1734, 3/7.)

2. ITALY: PROSPECTS FOR DC LEADERSHIP

EMBASSY ROME NOTES THAT DEFENSE MINISTER FORLANI AND PARTY SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI REMAIN THE MAJOR CONTENDERS FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY:

--ZACCAGNINI COMMANDS A NARROW MAJORITY BUT HIS REELECTION IS BY NO MEANS ASSURED AND COULD DEPEND ON WHETHER THE PARTY STATUTES ARE CHANGED TO PERMIT DIRECT ELECTION OF THE SECRETARY.

--THE NATIONAL CONGRESS, WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN MARCH 19 IN ROME, REPRESENTS VIRTUALLY THE LAST CHANCE FOR THE PARTY TO PUT ITS HOUSE IN ORDER PRIOR TO PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

EMBASSY COMMENT: FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, THE OPTIMUM OUTCOME OF THE FORTHCOMING CONGRESS WOULD BE THE DIRECT ELECTION OF FORLANI BY A BROAD MAJORITY OF THE DELEGATES. FORLANI REPRESENTS THE BEST THAT THE DC "THIRD GENERATION" HAS TO OFFER IN TERMS OF KEEPING THE COMMUNIST PARTY OUT OF THE GOVERNING MAJORITY AND PROMOTING A FAVORABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD GENERATIONAL CHANGE WITHIN THE PARTY. (SECRET) ROME 3716, 3/6.)

3. THE UK PEERS DOWN THE DARKENING RHODESIAN TUNNEL

EMBASSY LONDON ANALYZES BRITISH PERCEPTIONS OF POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DEEPENING RHODESIAN CRISIS. AS SEEN BY

HMG:

--THE CHANCES FOR A PEACEFUL CONSTITUTIONAL SETTLEMENT ARE REMOTE.

--ONLY VORSTER HAS THE LEVERAGE TO CONVINCE SMITH TO COME TO TERMS, BUT VORSTER'S MOOD IS DESCRIBED BY THE FOREIGN OFFICE AS "APOCALYPTICAL."

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--IF SMITH IS REMOVED BY A COUP BEFORE THE VIOLENCE GETS OUT OF HAND, BRITAIN MIGHT SEND TROOPS TO ESTABLISH ORDER AND SUPERVISE AN IMMEDIATE TRANSFER OF POWER.

--THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THE LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL INTERVENE MILITARILY, EVEN IF RHODESIA "DESCENDS INTO A NIGHTMARE OF BLOODSHED."

--SHOULD THE SECURITY POSITION OF THE WHITE RHODESIAN COMMUNITY BECOME DESPERATE, A MASS EVACUATION EFFORT WOULD BE ORGANIZED.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WE CANNOT ENVISAGE BRITAIN INTERVENING MILITARILY IN RHODESIA, NO MATTER HOW GREAT THE THREAT OR HOW COSTLY THE CONSEQUENCES. THE LABOR GOVERNMENT SEES LITTLE IT CAN DO, AND WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT LEADERSHIP FROM LONDON. (CONFIDENTIAL) LONDON 3315, 3/2.)

4. GISCARD DONS REFORMER IMAGE TO WOO THE LEFT

IN AN ATTEMPT TO BRING SOCIALIST AND LEFT RADICAL VOTERS INTO HIS MAJORITY, FRENCH PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING HAS MADE HIMSELF THE TORCHBEARER OF REFORM. HE WANTS TO EXPAND HIS NATIONAL POLITICAL BASE IN ORDER TO FORESTALL A LEFT VICTORY IN THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS SET FOR 1978. EMBASSY PARIS ASSESSES HIS RECORD TO DATE:

--SOCIAL REFORMS REVISING DIVORCE PROCEDURES, THE VOTING AGE, AND SOCIAL SECURITY HAVE PASSED THROUGH PARLIAMENT INTACT.

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--STRUCTURAL REFORMS SUCH AS A CAPITAL GAINS TAX, WHICH WOULD ALIENATE THE MORE CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN GISCARD'S MAJORITY, ARE USUALLY WATERED DOWN BY AMENDING OR BURIED UNDER A MASS OF COMPLEX REPORTS.

EMBASSY COMMENT: GISCARD COULD TURN HIS BACK ON CONSERVATIVES IN THE MAJORITY AND PUSH REFORM COME WHAT MAY, OR HE CAN MAKE HASTE SLOWLY, RETREATING WHENEVER THE DIVIDENDS OF HIS REFORM PROGRAM DWINDLE. HE WILL PROBABLY OPT FOR PRUDENCE. (CONFIDENTIAL) PARIS 6654, 3/4.) KISSINGER

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